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BORN FOR JOY, A UNIQUE SUMMER PROGRAM FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN DURING JULY, 1966.

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A 4-WEEK SUMMER PROGRAM WAS CONDUCTED IN A DISADVANTAGED AREA IN THE ADIRONDACK FOOTHILLS OF NEW YORK. TWO PROJECTS WERE OFFERED, ONE INVOLVING 90 CHILDREN IN GRADES 5 THROUGH 8, AND ANOTHER PROVIDING INSERVICE EDUCATION FOR 75 TEACHERS. THE PROJECT FOR STUDENTS CONSISTED OF CRAFTS, FILMS, RECREATION ACTIVITIES, LISTENING TO RECORDS AND STORYTELLING, HOMEMAKING EXPERIENCES, AND TRIPS TO CANADA, BOSTON, BUFFALO, AND ELSEWHERE. ONE FACET OF THE STUDENT PROJECT WAS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR 9 RETARDED BOYS TO ATTEND A CAMP FOR 3 WEEKS. THE TEACHERS WERE OFFERED 2-WEEK COURSES IN METHODS AND MATERIALS FOR READING INSTRUCTION IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND THE HIGH SCHOOL, AND A COURSE ON MENTAL HEALTH IN THE CLASSROOM. A DESCRIPTION OF BOTH PROJECTS IS GIVEN AND EVALUATIVE REMARKS ARE INCLUDED. AN APPENDIX CONTAINS THE EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS. (NH)

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BORN for JOY

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Lyons Falls, N.Y.

A UNIQUE SUMMER PROGRAM

FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

during

July------1966

Funded by

TITLE 1, ESEA

Conducted under the auspices of

The Board of Cooperative Educational Services

Sole Supervisory District of Lewis County
New York

EDITORS:

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INTRODUCTION

A century and a half ago, the genius, William Blake, wrote a poem which includes the phrase "....the bird that is born for joy...." The season he refers to is summer; the "bird" is synonymous with "child." Obviously, the idea of flight is implied--hence the titles of the sections of this report.

The report describes joyous experiences of children and teachers within the short span of four weeks during the summer of 1966. It gives the writers joy to report, briefly, what happened. We have evidence that the human spirit can, like a bird, soar above earthbound circumstances and view the "promised land" beyond; that children and teachers can experience joy.

It has been written of Washington and Franklin that they "could not live without a world created by their imagination." But "dreaming" is a function of all who look to a world in which children, youth, and adults may have equal opportunity to "become" all they are capable of being. The following is a segment of a dream come true.

We wish to thank Mrs. Barbara C. Hayes for her painstaking work in preparing this report for the printer.

The Editors

PREFACE

As the reader will note, Lewis County, New York, as a geographic and political unit, was designated throughout for Title 1, ESEA assistance. Numerous programs were conducted during the summer of 1966. Many teachers taught remedial reading and carried on a variety of programs to help disadvantaged children. Reports of these programs are familiar to me. I am glad to express my gratitude to all who were involved in them - administrators, teachers, teacher-aides, custodians, bus drivers, and parents.

I call attention to the two programs described in the following pages only because, through a happy combination of available funds, teachers, and ideas, we were encouraged to "have a go" at something different. We took a chance - small in scope as it may have been. At the conclusion of the program, however, I sensed a "break-through" in education. Because both programs were so gratifying to all concerned, I firmly believe that other people interested in the well-being of children and the personal development of teachers might want to read about them, particularly since we gave much time and thought to collecting data on these particular segments of our Title 1 program.

One final word. Such large programs as ESEA have some kinks in them, and I suspect we, in Lewis County, have experienced our share of problems. But I think these problems would have been much greater

were it not for Dr. Irving Ratchick, Coordinator of Title 1, and his able staff. Their patience and courtesy toward us were outstanding and unforgettable! And I would include in this tribute Mr. Joseph Amyot and Mr. Frank O'Connor, Division of Educational Finance.

Kenneth E. Ford
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THE CHILDREN: EARTHBOUND

We describe Lewis County; but there are hundreds of similar areas across the land. It is 1,270 square miles in area, has a population of 23,249, and is located in the foothills of the Adirondack Mountains. The median annual snowfall is the greatest east of the Rocky Mountains.

7,301 children attend school in seven school districts in the Sole Supervisory District of Lewis County; two of these schools are 65 miles apart. Four thousand, seven hundred pupils, or 3/4 of all pupils, are transported by 60 school buses 4,500 miles each day. Current figures show a drop-out rate of approximately 25 per cent. The median number of years of schooling of adult males in Lewis County over 25 years of age is 9.1 years, as compared with 10.7 for the state. (U.S. Census: Characteristics of the Population. 1960). Only eight other rural counties in New York State are at this low level. Between 1955-60, 33.8 per cent of the population five years old and over moved to a different house; 23 per cent moved within the county; 10.0 per cent moved out of the county. This migration is part of the national trend, as stated in the President's First Manpower Report (1963) in which he pointed out that "....nine out of ten young people growing up on the farm will have to leave the farm in order to find jobs."

13.4 per cent of the housing in Lewis County is inadequate; either "dilapidated" or without any plumbing facilities. The County has the highest fertility ratio in

New York State outside New York City.* Median income of families is $4,760. During 1959, 26.2 per cent of Lewis County families had total annual cash income of $3,000 or less, compared with 13.8 per cent of families for the state. The population size has remained nearly stable for 60 years, with a slight increase of 3.2 per cent between 1950-60. Only 8.1 per cent of Lewis County families have an income of over $10,000, as compared with 19.9 per cent for the entire state. With the exception of Lowville (population 3,800), the county seat and largest village in the county, the school population may be classified as rural, both farm and non-farm.

Teacher turn-over varies from year to year, but the over-all figure for the county through a period of several years would approximate 15 to 20 per cent annually. Generally speaking, a majority of the teachers are isolated from cultural stimulation and, although they respond to leadership and challenge, need every possible opportunity for re-charging their motivational and cultural resources. Only one administrator remains of the original nine who participated in a long-range in-service program for administrators, beginning in 1951 and ending in 1963.

It should be obvious that, in Lewis County, many children and youth are "educationally disadvantaged" to some extent and that this condition is highly related to their inability to absorb the education available to them without additional motivation. From our own ex-

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* The People of Lewis County, New York. (Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. Bulletin No. 62-63, August 1963.)

perience, we are convinced that a considerable number of families, desperately in need of Welfare assistance, refuse to accept this aid, primarily because they wish to remain independent. There are many "disadvantaged" children in Lewis County; and, even within this rural community, there are a variety of cultural complexes.

Children want to learn and enjoy learning. In four weeks, sufficient money enabled us, with selected teachers and a program which embraced the flexibility of a child, to show that children can like school and learn in it--even during summer.

We know: (1) The child has emotional needs: he functions best with a good opinion of himself. (2) Optimum learning occurs when information is relevant to one's life. (3) Verbal facility develops best in a stimulating, varied environment--where vocabulary must be refined in order to express nuances of reaction. (4) Children have much physical energy, which must be expressed.

THE KEY TO FLIGHT

We have found a key--not the only one, to be sure, but a key--to free the educationally deprived child from a condition where ability not called upon may atrophy. We believe we have strengthened the wings of some with experience outside the limitation of rural isolation and the classroom.

Title 1 funds received too late for use during the regular September 1965-June 1966 school year, were available in July, 1966, to involve (a) 90 children, grades five through eight, with 10 teachers and (b) 75 teachers in an imaginative four-week summer school program. Planners based the program on the Title 1 objective: to meet the special educational needs of educationally deprived children. They refined the objective with these assumptions: (1) Reading facility beneath school requirement causes handicaps in various school subjects and a destructive self-image of failure. (2) Cultural disadvantage, comprising home conditions, posture toward the school, parental deprivation, quality of conversation in the home, poor self-image, and an unstimulating environment, contribute to inability to read. Reading has meaning only as it relates to one's own experience, and the educationally disadvantaged child, without exposure to cultural media, without varied and stimulating experience, has a narrow "life space" and little to read from. A limited experience demands only a limited vocabulary. (3) The school can help the disadvantaged child to read by providing experiences which constitute something to read from.

THE KEY TO FLIGHT

The program's methods had been seldom, if ever, tried; only dreamed of; so faith in their value for its end played a part. Erich Fromm upholds the necessity of faith:

> The history of science is replete with instances of faith in reason and visions of truth...At every step from the conception of a rational vision, to the formulation of a theory, faith is necessary: faith in the hypothesis as a likely and plausible proposition, and faith in the final theory, at least until a general consensus about its validity has been reached. This faith is rooted in one's own experiance, in the confidence on one's power of thought, observation, and judgment....*

The two programs described in the following pages represent the innovative and creative. There were many other good programs in Lewis County, but these two were the least orthodox.

This summer program was set up to delight the hearts of youngsters: making things; playing games; seeing new places; learning what to do and how to behave while traveling and living in hotels; caring for each other; sharing responsibilities; knowing beforehand what to expect; but, above all, being with adults who were excited by the challenge of trying to bridge a wide and deep

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* Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving (New York: A Bantam Book, published by arrangement with Harper & Row, Publisher, Inc., 1956.)

chasm of non-experience--at least, to the extent possible in four weeks.

Teachers started where the child was in terms of experience, interests, and development and proceeded in this posture.

> If he (the teacher) is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind.*

Two teachers were selected whose home economics classrooms, comprising kitchen and living room areas, allowed students mobility. Two teachers' regular classrooms were industrial arts shops, where students work with their hands as well as their minds. A third teacher's regular classroom was a physical education gymnasium or, in appropriate weather, the outdoors. Another was a creative Cuban woman, whose teaching experience had been as a "substitute." One was an art teacher; another a sixth-grade teacher with a passion for music. The nine special class boys had their own teacher.

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* Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet (New York: Alfred Knopf, Publisher, 1965.) p.62.

ON THE WING

The program--broadly outlined--was set up to consist mainly of:

1. Experiences in arts and crafts, i.e., painting, pottery, woodwork, etc.
2. Viewing a wide variety of films, followed by discussion.
3. Games, outdoor and inside, together with study and use of local resources.
4. Listening to recordings; relating music to films when possible.
5. Story-telling; listening to poetry; reading at will.
6. Some homemaking experiences, such as preparing their own lunches, together with attention to the hygiene involved.
7. Field trips to the following places:

   Ottawa, Canada - four days including transit
   Boston, Massachusetts - four days including transit
   Buffalo, New York - three days including transit
   St. Lawrence Seaway
   Cooperstown, New York - Museum
   Playtown, New York
   Whetstone Gulf, Lewis County, New York

The teachers involved had a planned budget but were informed that the above program need not be rigidly followed, except in spirit. Only minor changes were made. All hotel reservations were made prior to scheduling trips, and special rates were arranged.

Nine retarded boys were provided with a three-week stay at Camp Oswegatchie, New York, at no cost to them, with their teacher as counselor. This program consisted of "timber cruising", i.e., tree identification and estimate of lumber footage per tree; nature walks; making nests and "duck blinds;" swimming; boat safety and pleasure boating; archery, arts and crafts, athletics, such as soft-ball, volleyball; campfire gatherings, cook-outs, and over-night hikes.

They participated in all organized programs of the camp such as field days, woodsman's days, rodeos, water front games. Also, they were responsible for policing certain camp areas, were inspected, and one week won the award for policing.

They went on an overnight trip to Lake George and visited Fort Ticonderoga; went to the St. Lawrence Seaway, and had a boat ride on the St. Lawrence River. From there they visited Canada and were thrilled to see, for the first time, a real flag of a different country.

Their counselor has stated enthusiastically that such an experience is worth a year in the classroom. He stated that a characteristic parent response came forth after the parent's son had taken him around the camp, exploring the facilities and describing the program: the father broke down, and with tears flowing down his face, said, "This is the first time my boy (seventeen years old) has shown any initiative."

Another boy, coming out of his room at a motel with a big grin on his face, exclaimed, "The room has inside plumbing and a shower!"

Can the reader imagine that these boys would not like to repeat the experience? They certainly wanted to!

The planners gave the program's objectives and broad outline to Mr. William Pond of the South Lewis Central School, whose experience in his industrial arts classroom and in boys' camps had given him a feeling for balancing work, play, and rest for the child's benefit and satisfaction. He considered the child's attention span and wisely selected and organized mobile, tactile, visual, and auditive activities. He, with Mrs. Barbara Erwin, produced a detailed "plan book" which states these goals: (1) leadership; (2) art appreciation; (3) awareness of our technological age; (4) opportunity for self improvement; (5) opportunity for accomplishment; (6) improved social behavior; (7) motivation for more education. It lists activities to serve these goals: (a) art appreciation; (b) trips to museums; (c) viewing different styles of architecture, as seen in Canada, the United States, rural areas and cities; (d) cathedrals; (e) viewing films; (f) handicrafts and painting. It provides daily schedules, divided in half-hour segments, with space for evaluation and remarks for teachers to fill in. By recording children's responses on their schedules, teachers could see what worked and made changes, if necessary; for growth was incorporated into the program; flexibility was pre-supposed.

The plan book contained other practical needs: permission slips for parents to sign before field trips; pro-

jected budget, clothing lists, and tips on behavior during trips. In short--Title 1 money, the challenge of an opportunity to do something unusual, and the availability of a few teachers who were perfectly in tune with the idea enabled planning for every detail. As more teachers and groups were added, they had a "plan book" ready-made.

NEW VISTAS

What was accomplished? The evaluative summary which follows shows that children and teachers grew in knowledge and in understanding of each other. Children learned and became enthusiastic about learning more. Their vision was expanded; their attitudes, changed.

Teachers learned what boys and girls respond to, such as change in pace; field trips, near and far; kinetic experience; involvement before, during, and after an experience; new experiences. Disadvantaged children are figuratively in a rut--a deep one--which, once in, the driver can't get out of, possibly ever, until he gets off that road. Teachers learned what characteristics are essential in a person who attempts to help disadvantaged children which may not be possible to learn in a conventional classroom, such as trying to see the world as the child sees it; realizing that a disadvantaged child has pride, and like all children feels pain, knows sorrow, and sometimes humiliation; and needs to be accepted and to know success.

Among other things the teachers gained insight into the children's negative attitude toward school, for, as one youngster wrote before the program, "I don't like school because I'd rather be doing things at home." After the program the child repeated the original statement, adding "...but this summer was fun for me in school when we cooked our own meals, went on trips. I wish we could do this next year, too." They confirmed belief in the teacher's potential to help children.

The Appendix includes a list of evaluative devices, designed in keeping with the purpose of the program. Because the programs looked exciting from their inception, we set to with a hearty will to collect all the data possible. All together, the data weighs twenty pounds. The reader, however, should not be dismayed that the evaluation is largely subjective. Consider that Santayana said,

> "It is not wisdom to be only wise,
> And on the inward vision close the eyes,
> But it is wisdom to believe the heart."*

It is difficult to measure growth in a human being: the variables are infinite. Nevertheless, our conviction in beneficial change is sure. Kahlil Gibran's wise prophet, Almustafa, said,

> ...seek not the depths of your knowledge with staff or sounding line. For self is a sea boundless and measureless. The soul walks not upon a line, neither does it grow like a reed. The soul unfolds itself, like a lotus of countless petals.**

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* George Santayana, "O World, Thou Choosest Not the Better Part." from The Philosophy of Santayana (New York: Random House, Publisher, 1936.)

** Gibran, op. cit., p.60,61.

VISTAS IN DETAIL

The evaluation of pupil responses to school, to the various aspects of the program, and to their favorite teachers is - we repeat - subjective, in view of the kinds of instruments used in eliciting responses. Feelings regarding school were obtained by having each of the children write a free-response essay on the topic "School" before and after the program. Each child was asked to respond before the program began to the statement: "Without giving any names, why do you like your favorite teacher?"

In general, responses to this question would fall under such headings as, "The teacher was nice to me;" "...has time for me;" "...did things with us;" "...doesn't yell at me;" "...doesn't give too much homework." One eighth grade boy said, "When I had a question, my favorite teacher answered it." A girl wrote, "She explained things to us, took time to help us and was like one of us." These children referred several times to teachers with a sense of humor and to favorite teachers because they "were fair in punishing us and are not mean to us."

The essence of their responses boils down to a teacher who recognizes the limitations of disadvantaged children and, therefore, tunes in on their wave length: "he takes time to explain."

Apparently some disadvantaged children do not like a very rigid, autocratic teacher; learning in a rigid classroom may be inhibited, and such a setting might

contribute to the development of classroom behavior problems. Behavior of the children during the four weeks suggests that the incidence of personality conflict between student and teacher is likely to be higher in a rigid setting with a teacher who lacks the qualities the disadvantaged child needs and responds to. It seems that a wide variety of experiences and activities involving the student and the teacher would increase the students' interest in school and learning. There is no doubt that a closer involvement of the teacher with the students leads to greater understanding of disadvantaged children by the teacher.

Finally, at the conclusion of the program, each child was asked to complete a rating scale instrument to record his or her feelings about the various activities included in the program and to respond in writing to the question: "What do you think you will remember the longest?"

We shall not trouble the reader by a detailed account of how the project was evaluated. Two professional people were assigned to go carefully through all the data; set up criteria for making judgments; and to tabulate results.

Sixteen (16) activities included in the program were rated by the youngsters. These activities were: making things; making pictures and painting; playing games; seeing movies; lunch; hearing music; reading stories; trips to local industries; trip to Hancock Air Base; trips to Ottawa, St. Lawrence Seaway, Buffalo, Niagara Falls, The Canadian National Museum; swimming and picnics; and visits to the Munson-Williams-Proctor Art

Gallery in Utica. These show an unmistakable emphasis in favor of activity, and the lunch period; although none of the sixteen items were rated completely negative.

Statements made repeatedly by disadvantaged children, who had no interest in school or in learning, suggest that activities of the type experienced by the children in the summer program might have a significant influence on educational development if similar experiences were included in the regular program.

It is interesting to note that only four of the children expressed any negative feelings after the experience of the program. However, we believe this important: whereas, in the pre-program essay, they gave only generalized or stereotyped responses, they later revealed their true feelings overtly in writing, perhaps for the first time: they felt free to talk!

The majority of the essays rated as positive showed some indication of increasing awareness regarding school values.

In general, the post-program essays show more awareness of the value of educational experiences associated with the school. There was an increase in the number of children who saw school as a place to meet and make friends, gain new experiences, learn and have fun, prepare for a job, and where teachers are viewed with pleasure.

A tally was made of all student responses on the rating scale instrument to determine the areas of highest and lowest student interest. In setting up the evaluation of this four-week program, we thought the young-

sters could tell us something of value about specific experiences. They did!

The trips taken, excluding the trips to local industry, were chosen as "liked most" at a rate better than three to one over all the other activities combined. This is not surprising; most of the children in the study had not been out of New York State or the United States, and a high percentage had not been out of the home county or farther away than a radius of approximately 60 miles from their homes. A normal sixth-grade child in a small village in Lewis County didn't know the geographic location of two cities, each 40 miles away: when his parents took him there, they went to the "town."

Every child's written response to the question: "What do you think you will remember the longest?" cited one of the trips or some aspect of a trip, e.g., seeing the Parliament buildings in Ottawa and the "Changing of the Guard," staying in a hotel, eating in restaurants, seeing a large city, riding the subway.

For example, one seventh-grade boy indicated that he will remember the trip to Niagara Falls the longest because he had been wondering about it for such a long time and had finally got to see it. An eighth-grade girl stated that she will remember Ottawa the longest because "the people were so nice to you and explained things." An eighth-grade boy commented, "What I will remember most is how many factories and stores there are in just one block, compared to all of Lowville." An eighth-grade girl stated, "I think I'll remember the trip to Ottawa and the "Changing of the Guard" the longest. I'm not sure why it impressed me more than

Buffalo, but perhaps no glaring signs, the absence of pollution, the beautiful areas and the tiniest bit of Old World culture affected this decision for me."

Programs under Title 1 were designed to help educationally and culturally disadvantaged children. There can be no doubt - in this case - that this did occur. But there was a fringe benefit, equally, if not more, important! Teachers moved toward better understanding of disadvantaged children. Apparently, teaching took on a new dimension! Teachers, we know, have feelings; but, during this project, the teachers involved seemed, more than usual, to feel with the children: they were able, more than is usually the case, to focus on "a child." Who could resist feeling choked up by seeing a boy who (in preparation for one of the field trips) struggled to maintain his dignity and meet his teacher's expectations by polishing his farmer-type work shoes, without soles, to a high shine. The teacher said, "I could have cried!"

At the conclusion of the project, the participating teachers were brought together to discuss their feelings and reactions to the summer program. They were encouraged to respond freely to a series of general questions covering their experiences.

Without exception, the teachers stated that the children were enthusiastic about the program. They specifically pointed out positive student reactions to activities and the high quality of behavior during the program. Some effects of the program on individuals were also noted. An example was given of one boy who had been somewhat withdrawn at the outset and had a great deal of trouble getting along with his teach-

ers in the previous grades. While orally taciturn, his behavior was noticeably bizarre. A year after the program, on the second day of school, he went out of his way to see a summer program teacher in her classroom - on the pretext, so it seems, of asking a question. The teacher believes he wanted her to "notice" him, and, in his way, was giving her a signal that "things were looking up." This boy is currently interacting with teachers in school and makes an effort to talk with them. He is generally showing a more positive attitude toward school this year. It was noted that other individuals who were termed "loners" now have some friends and are more outgoing.

During the program, the students got together in small groups to talk about past activities or their anticipation of what was coming up next. Many of them actually enjoyed having a discussion and expressing their feelings.

Teachers emphasized, to their amazement, that while on field trips, these disadvantaged children asked multitudes of questions of the guides and the teachers. This was quite different from their observed behavior in a regular classroom.

The first day, children complained about attending school in summer. By the end of the day, they were looking forward to the next day of school. This anticipation continued throughout the four weeks, and many students expressed regret that the program had to end. One boy wanted to know how he could get his little brother chosen next year so he could have the same experiences that he had had. Some boys and girls even

expressed a desire to help plan the next year's trips.

The teachers believed that the students gained immeasurably from the program and that this was reflected in words and behavior. Children showed up regularly at school one half hour early and lingered after school. In one group, only one girl of the thirty children left the program. A shy, withdrawn little girl said, "I never really talked to a teacher before." At the end of the final week, a teacher recalled, "They took so long to say goodbye."

The teachers emphasized what they thought were important things to do before, during, and after exposing the child to a new experience. All the teachers agreed on the value of a short briefing before a trip, pointing out things to look for that might ordinarily be overlooked by the children (different types of occupations, architecture, etc.). The effectiveness of this was illustrated by the large amount of factual information retained after taking a canal trip in Ottawa which the adults thought might be a bit boring: depth of water; width of canal; speed of boat; and facts of navigation.

The students were given responsibility for the preparation of lunches, which was also an important part of the experience. Teachers concluded that, after some initial resistance, they actually enjoyed having responsibilities. Serving a group of guests was a high point of their experience. One boy - heretofore unpromising - turned out to be a master of organizing the group for roll-call on buses and on the playground: he had, one teacher reported, all the earmarks of a platoon officer!

The program gave the students a chance to learn

what is involved in traveling, packing clothes, use of public rest rooms, being considerate of others' property, and hotel living. Growth in these areas was apparent and striking to all the teachers involved. During the trips, many people - complete strangers - went out of their way to comment on the exemplary behavior of the children in hotels and restaurants.

The teachers were encouraged to discuss follow-up procedure for this type of program as well as recommendations about education in general. They suggested having some group discussion about their experiences at intervals during the school term. The children were used in an orientation program for incoming students (helping them to get to know the building). Reports by parents of their children's reactions were obtained and were all positive. Some students presented slides to other students of places seen on the trips and described interesting experiences. Teachers suggested that education for the disadvantaged child could be made more meaningful and interesting through the use of more activities and field trips throughout the school year. Teachers were invited to describe the program to service clubs and PTA's, illustrated with slides and photographs.

Finally, and with significant results, the teachers were asked to describe their personal feelings and reactions to this type of experience. They emphasized a substantial feeling of loyalty that had developed between student and teacher and that this was a prime factor in the excellent self-control displayed by pupils during the trips. The teachers did not expect misbehavior, and therefore it was minimal during the program.

A contributing factor here was that neither teacher nor student was under pressure. One teacher commented that "I could just be myself." The teachers generally felt the development of more tolerance and understanding within themselves for this age group. They felt closer to the children than ever before, and the students responded positively to this increased affection and attention from the teachers. The teachers agreed that there was a greater understanding of the basic needs of these children that must be satisfied before learning could take place. This was exemplified when the teacher, in helping a little boy pack his highly-polished shoes, (see p. 17) had asked herself, "Why shouldn't this child have difficulty in learning?" To the other teachers, she said, "I would have, too, if I were walking barefoot on the stones."

The writers believe that what the children stated and did underlines what has been dogmatically and theoretically asserted for decades, if not generally practiced, to wit:

1. Greater learning can take place in a more relaxed atmosphere than is frequently found in the regular classroom.
2. The teacher can function more efficiently when he is encouraged to exercise imagination and to see the potential for movement and creativity within the dimensions of what is perceived--often erroneously--to be a constraining syllabus.

In support of these hypotheses, one teacher directly expressed relief from pressure as follows: "Teaching in

summer school was a pleasure for me--I enjoyed the change of pace and getting out of the same old teaching routine."

Teachers thoroughly enjoyed the program! They emphasized the value for them (personally) of close personal contacts with students, the variety of activities involved, the absence of pressures in the normal school routines, the change of pace, and the chance to observe student interaction. The teachers asserted that seeing these students succeed in school-related activities and their enjoying school was justification for the program.

In summary, the teachers agreed that, "The children were interested, worked hard, and had a positive attitude." One teacher stated, "I only wish a greater number of children could participate. They need this kind of spark to kindle their interest. It could be the difference between success and failure!" As one teacher put it - "If I knew then what I know now, I would have done it without pay."

THE TEACHERS: EARTHBOUND

Teachers, too, have their frustrations, and they are not decreasing! It has long been a tenet of leaders in the Lewis County District that, ideally, some in-service training of teachers may be more effective if done at the local level. Unless compelled to do so, teachers, already heavily burdened, are reluctant to give both time and money required for regular summer school at some distant college or university. They will, however, take summer training if it is made convenient and is not a financial burden. These are realities of our time, not always understood!

Lewis County teachers had already demonstrated their willingness to meet reasonable demands for upgrading themselves when, during a mental health project, financed by the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene, 90 of them participated in a three-year course in child study under the aegis of the University of Maryland.* And what they did made a difference!

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* See Ch. V., Morris & Gosline, Mobilizing a Rural Community For Mental Health (Boonville, New York: Willard Press, 1964.)

THE KEY TO FLIGHT

We decided to offer three courses, for credit, and "free," focusing, so far as possible, on topics which would help teachers contribute to the aims of ESEA--"Reading" and "Mental Health"--as these topics related to educationally disadvantaged children. The machinery, i.e., a qualified staff, was already here: a reading coordinator; an Ed. D., with wide experience, including college teaching, administration, work with urban and rural disadvantaged children; a well-trained psychiatrist; an experienced psychiatric social worker; a clinical psychologist; and an elementary supervisor. St. Lawrence University gave its generous support to this program. Title 1 funds provided the fuel to put the idea into being.

To our knowledge, only six teachers would have gone from Lewis County to a regularly-scheduled summer school during the period described. As it turned out, 75 enrolled for courses in Lewis County. Because of Title 1 goals, the staff felt free to emphasize the needs of the disadvantaged. As the reader has already learned from the brief description of Lewis County, supported by our tabulated teacher evaluations, such experience as was provided in local teacher-training courses, focused on local conditions and circumstances, put the teacher at an advantage: he was somewhat in tune with the area, its unique advantages and problems.

In setting up the content of the three courses, all teachers enrolled were brought together so that the instructors could plan their courses as much as possible

around the teachers' perceptions of their own needs. To be sure, within the summer courses, a few duds were fired, as indicated by teacher evaluations. But these, too, we believe, are important to know for our purpose. To teach well there must be feedback from pupils, regardless of age.

The classes were held in a large room in the Learning & Resource Center made possible under Title 1. The Learning & Resource Center provides two main services to the schools in Lewis County and Oneida County: a Reading Clinic, staffed by a full-time reading coordinator; a psychiatrist, one day a week; a psychiatric social worker, two days each week; and an audio-visual program of materials and services. The staff for this program includes a director, secretary-assistant, resource materials coordinator, two graphic artists, an electronic technician, and two people in charge of material maintenance and delivery. Physical facilities provide office space; a video-tape recording studio and classroom; a reading clinic; space for listening to tapes and recordings, viewing slides and filmstrips and previewing films; a graphic production department; 980 films--800 of this collection having been built up during previous years as part of the audio-visual program developed by BOCES, 2,000 filmstrips, 500 disk recordings, and an extensive collection of art prints, posters, bulletin-board pictures and study print sets.

ON THE WING AND NEW VISTAS

Three two-week courses (each of 35 hours duration) were offered: Methods and Materials for Teaching of Reading in the High School; Reading in the Elementary School; and Mental Health in the Classroom.

Space does not permit other than a brief statement about each course. Reading in the High School was offered--among other reasons--to help high school teachers realize that teaching reading must continue beyond grade six. Therefore, considerable time was devoted to giving the teachers a framework for understanding why reading is a skill not possessed equally by all pupils and that many pupils can only reach a certain level of proficiency in reading. The emphasis was placed on helping teachers to approach "reading" with a flexible and understanding frame of mind, especially as this pertains to disadvantaged pupils. The reader's milieu was a recurring theme throughout the course; together with practical suggestions on how to expand this milieu in the classroom. There was an unrehearsed demonstration by a teacher and two pupils on how a teacher may carefully assess a pupil's study habits--a matter often neglected, or considered superficially. When it was shown that even conscientious pupils from highly-motivated homes do not always have the best study habits, the handicaps of disadvantaged children in this respect were considerably high-lighted. Time was given to diagnostic procedures, which could be easily understood and useful; the text used being "Diagnostic Teaching of Reading" by Strang.

ON THE WING AND NEW VISTAS

Reading in the Elementary School was designed to help the elementary teacher gain more flexibility in dealing with slow and retarded readers. For this purpose, the instructors studiously avoided dealing with techniques of teaching reading per se and repeatedly pointed out the many available resources for broadening the child's experiences as background for reading. Emphasis was placed on the need for disadvantaged children to verbalize - to talk - on matters close to their own experience, in a somewhat free-wheeling way, so that they could feel comfortable with words before being lock-stepped into a formal reading program.

The course on Mental Health in the Classroom was designed to help the teachers gain insight into the frustrations of boys and girls when they are confronted with situations and demands beyond their capabilities. Again, the child's environment - "life space" - was explored in as much detail as possible, together with implications for learning, beginning with observations made on a school bus trip. Concrete examples of how children "feel" were considered so that the teachers could better understand the limitless role of emotions in causing behavior: the logic of behavior as this works to create sticky situations. Other topics appropriate to the course included perception, inertia, motivational deprivation. Of these, the teachers seemed to respond most to the intriguing panorama which emerges when one takes the first steps toward understanding the personalized and frequently distorted lenses developed and used by human beings to look inside and outside themselves.

Furthermore, the teachers were encouraged to discuss their own frustrations - to examine their effects, to

realize that some frustration is normal; and to distinguish between what could be changed and what must be accepted. For example, teachers often express their desire to do things "if they only had more time." In this case, discussion centered around the "reality" of time as something always limited: at one hundred years of age, one would wish for five years more, and so on.

Teachers were shown how to cope with a nebulous maze of demands by sorting out priorities and focusing more on these, in the best order.

Each course included liberal use of audio-visual materials, demonstration, some role-playing, and small group discussions. The focus was mostly on attitudes and understandings; little on techniques.

After each session a committee of teachers summarized the day's activities and had them duplicated so each teacher could have a copy; thus we have a day-by-day account of what teachers abstracted from each course.

Responses by the teachers were enthusiastic as revealed by unsigned rating scales. Over ninety per cent rated the courses as "good" or "excellent," which far exceeded the hopes of the instructors.

The teachers who took the course, Reading in the High School, listed the following experiences as most helpful:

1. Discussions in small groups where ideas were developed.
2. The use of films (on reading) and other audio-

visual aids, illustrating ways to expand the reader's knowledge.

3. Lack of pressure and anxiety on them as students (grades were assigned at the start).
4. Having resumés of previous sessions handed out daily.
5. Exchange of materials and ideas among group members.
6. Realizing that one actually teaches reading in almost any course he teaches and the principles of reading can be applied to other learning.
7. Teachers should encourage each pupil to verbalize in the classroom.
8. All pupils entering high school do not read well, and the blame for this cannot be placed on the method used. "Reading problems are multi-dimensional and more involved than I thought." Thus, the need to consider the "life space" or total environment of each child, including perceptions of the pupil and teacher.
9. High school teachers <u>can</u> become better reading teachers.
10. There are many untapped ways to motivate disadvantaged children to enjoy reading; the teacher should be encouraged to try new methods of teaching reading.

11. Reading can be made interesting.

12. There is a difference between the slow reader and the retarded reader.

Other experiences listed by individual teachers in the group were: learning methods of diagnosing reading problems; actual demonstrations with a pupil; learning what materials were available at the Learning and Resource Center; the demonstration by one of the teachers on "Learning to Read With Color."

Twenty-three elementary teachers completed the course on Reading in the Elementary School, and all of them rated it "good" or "excellent" at its conclusion.

As described above, the focus of the course was on the imaginative use of numerous materials and methods which could be used to spark the latent abilities of disadvantaged boys and girls. The first day's program set the tone for succeeding days. The teachers were taken on a school bus route over dirt roads to isolated homes. They had first-hand experience of what each child goes through twice each day and thereby moved a step closer to seeing the school through the eyes and the physical needs of a child whose school day is lengthened at both ends by a bouncing ride in a school bus.

The elementary teachers listed as valuable:

1. Demonstrations of what can be gained by field trips.

2. Demonstrations on helping pupils verbalize.

3. Familiarization with Learning Center services

and materials available to teachers during the school year; use of some of these materials in the summer course work.

4. Small groups discussed with other teachers; exchange of ideas and classroom experiences.
5. Teacher demonstration of reading methods.
6. Assurance that teachers need not worry so much about students attaining certain levels of competence at certain ages.
7. Bus trips to economically deprived areas.
8. Specific ways to help disadvantaged children.
9. Learning in an anxiety-free classroom.
10. How reading can be made interesting and enjoyable.
11. The many uses of a single film:
    (a) Many channels prepare children for reading and make it interesting. All experiences are related to reading.
    (b) Films can acquaint disadvantaged children with other environments.
    (c) Films for older children can be used for younger children.
    (d) Films help develop vocabulary.
12. Teachers should try not to become discouraged when children do not measure up to expectation.

13. We must consider the total child--his environment, his experiences, his needs. Reading problems are not always results of inadequate teaching techniques. Children should be treated as individuals. Respect individual rates of development.

14. Need for the child to verbalize and ways to stimulate this.

15. Other teachers have the same teaching problems.

16. Techniques are not as important as building experiences and readiness for reading.

17. Teachers should broaden their own experiences--keep growing. Their teaching will reflect this.

18. Involve children in actual experiences rather than just tell them about experiences.

19. Most children will eventually read to capacity when ready--all things being equal.

20. Bus ride and trip to a chain store increased understanding of the child's viewpoint.

21. Be creative. Experiment with techniques.

22. Teachers often underestimate the child's capacity for learning.

Apparently many valuable concepts and experiences were gained by teachers in this course. As a whole, the written responses of this group were positive and showed an increasing awareness of the teacher's role in broadening the experiences and interests of disadvantaged children, and the effect of this in the teaching of read-

ing in the elementary grades. The following statement seems a fair estimate of the group's enthusiasm: "I have taken two or three courses for the last eight years from five colleges at personal expense and time, and I found this course the most enlightening, refreshing, and beneficial. Thank you!"

For the course on "Mental Health in the Classroom" teachers were asked to provide the instructors with unsigned evaluations. They found the following experiences valuable:

1. The films on emotionally disturbed children.
2. Lectures on the "Communication of Child Behavior."
3. Discussion of "conformity" and "disturbance" in children.
4. Discussion of the parent's role in mental health.
5. Discussion of a "needs" theory (simple and operational).
6. Discussion of criticism and praise as applied to children.
7. The life-space concept.
8. Discussion of a specific case - "The Case of Alan."
9. Small group discussions.
10. How the teacher observes, interprets and reacts to children's behavior. The teacher's personal anxiety and needs.

11. The many facets of mental disturbance.
12. Some ways teachers can identify disturbed children.
13. A recognition that professional help is available if sought after.
14. Understanding the language of the child.
15. Various ways of motivating children.
16. The school's role and its importance in the formulation of value systems.
17. That teachers must set limits for acceptable behavior, be consistent, and meet the child's needs.
18. Acceptance of personal feelings by the teacher lets the students know that teachers, too, have feelings.
19. We need more time to understand the meaning of behavior.

CHILDREN AND TEACHERS RENEWED

Careful evaluation of written teacher responses to the courses offered in this program lead one to the unmistakable conclusion that programs of this type are essential for helping disadvantaged children! Responses of the majority of teachers were positive and showed personal growth.

Certain approaches and techniques appear to be very effective in stimulating their interest and understanding. A wide variety of materials, audio-visual aids and demonstrations was emphasized repeatedly by the teachers as making important contributions to their learning. Small-group discussion following presentations, films or demonstrations gave the teachers an opportunity to test and clarify their understanding of the presentations. Learning in an anxiety-free atmosphere was noted as an enjoyable and, for some, a new experience that they would like to repeat.

Perhaps most fruitful for all concerned was the opportunity to take a fresh look at children who, because they live so near, could nevertheless be so far away; to come to grips with the feelings and perceptions of children who may feel that they don't belong, so to speak!

CONCLUSION

On the first page of Summer Education for Children of Poverty we read, (These programs)... "were ...of special significance because the unusual atmosphere of summer schools provided special opportunities for learning...not only by the children, but also by the educators concerned with devising new approaches to successful schooling for the disadvantaged."*

Throughout the above named report, the theme "innovative," appears. We believe that "Born For Joy" is a vivid example of what the National Advisory Council on the Education of Disadvantaged Children found most worthwhile.

"Born For Joy" was innovative: (1) A free camp experience for nine retarded boys from a sparsely populated rural area, is a rare, if not unprecedented, experience. (2) The scope and nature of experiences for eighty other children, particularly the travel. (3) The design and focus of accredited in-service training for teachers; one fourth of those in the Title 1 project area were involved. (4) Evaluation was extensive!

"Born For Joy" has forced its planners to look critically at some aspects of educating disadvantaged child-

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* Report of the National Advisory Council on the Education of Disadvantaged Children, Summer Education For Children of Poverty (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966.)

ren, and even to question some presumably good approaches to this problem. One matter seems quite clear at this point; and we are compelled to raise this question: if reading is a major tool in education, are we possibly placing too much emphasis on "remedial" reading per se? Is there not an experiential gap in the background of disadvantaged children which can only be filled - not by stronger and repeated doses of the same - but by daring programs designed to give the children a background for reading? Our evidence weighs heavily in favor of experience. It would be an interesting and exciting venture to test this proposition under rigidly controlled conditions!

"Born For Joy" suggests, too, that disadvantaged children require the guidance of teachers with special characteristics. The sine qua non is respect for human beings as such. In addition, these teachers, too, are not unduly frightened by the unknown; they respond to the challenge of the "innovative."

Nothing is more exciting than to see a theory tested and proved! Environment does shape children; teachers and pupils have untapped resources! Our experience, limited as it may be, is more then a "straw in the wind." It is a noticeable area of blue sky and a ray of light!

APPENDICES

A. Directions for administering tests.

B. Questionnaire for pupils (described on pp. 13-17); including essay, "Why You Liked Your Favorite Teacher."

C. Pre-test for students; to be done the first day of summer project or before. (Essay on "School;" questionnaire [see Appendix B].)

D. Post-test for students;
   (a) repeat essay on "School."
   (b) check list of experiences, rated by pupils (see Appendix E).
   (c) written statements by children on "What I Will Remember the Longest."
   (d) repeat essay on "Why You Liked Your Favorite Teacher."

E. Check list of experiences rated by pupils.

F. Anecdotal records and diaries of teachers in the children's program.

G. Pre-course teacher questionnaires, to determine the topics of most interest and value to the teachers, which should be stressed in the courses.

H. Post-course evaluations by teachers.

Other documents developed and used in the two programs described are:

1. Design, directions, and budget for children's program.
2. Pre- and post-essays by teachers for three courses; subject for each essay is the title of the course taught.
3. Daily reports by teacher committees of course content.
4. Tape recordings of evaluation sessions.
5. Photographs of children's activities.
6. Evaluation and criteria as produced by evaluators.

APPENDIX A

Directions for administering free response and subjective evaluation tests.

1. These are usually "before" and "after" tests.

2. They are designed to elicit unstructured, free response statements from which we may abstract evaluations.

3. They are designed around the purpose and goals of the experience to be evaluated.

4. They are worthless unless administered, both times, via a standardized procedure.

5. Directions for administering these instruments must be followed to the letter. Any deviation contaminates the material.

6. The administrator of the test must not answer questions - put to him by the testee - concerning the instrument. The response to a question must be - "just write on the topic."

7. In giving the post test - the administrator of the testing exercise must behave as though no previous test had been given, and must not, under any circumstances, allude to the experience for which the evaluation is required. A typical response to a pupil's question is - "just go ahead and write on the topic."

APPENDIX B

"QUESTIONNAIRE"
(For pupils - described on pp. 13-17)

NAME_____ GRADE_____

FATHER'S OCCUPATION_____

1. Have you ever stayed away from home?_____
2. What towns and cities have you visited outside of Lewis County?_____

_____

3. If you have been outside Lewis County, what place did you like best and why?

_____

4. Do not name a teacher, but write briefly on the topic: "Why You Liked Your Favorite Teacher."

APPENDIX C

Evaluation: Title 1 Project
To be done the first day of summer project or before

I Ask pupils to write an essay (about 15-20 minutes) on the topic "School." Please read directions (Appendix A) entitled "Directions for administering free response and subjective evaluation tests." Have pupils sign at bottom of page when finished. Be sure to get names.

II Hand out "Questionnaire." Read each statement aloud to pupils as they read silently.

APPENDIX D

Post-tests

I (a) Repeat essay on "School" (Item I, Appendix C) - following the same procedure and "directions."

(b) (Refer to "Check list of experiences," Appendix E.) "I will now give you a sheet listing the things you did this summer. After each thing you did is a line with numbers such as this:

Didn't Like	Liked Some	Fair	Liked a Lot	Liked Most
0	1	2	3	4

I should like each of you to put an X under the number which shows how you feel about the things you did as listed on the sheet."

On Items 10 and 11, following the number the teacher will fill in names of trips and follow the same pattern for rating.

Following Items 10 and 11 is space for special experiences such as "Spanish Day," etc., which the teacher must fill in.

II What do you think you will remember longest? (Here the teacher may suggest that the pupil may want to range anywhere from one item to the entire experience --and should say-- "If you find it hard to name just one thing, write anything you wish - we want you to write anything that will help us if we plan something like this for boys and girls who may be in the program next summer.")

III Repeat essay on "Why You Liked Your Favorite Teacher" - following the same procedure and "directions."

IV If possible - the teacher may have oral evaluation by the group - to be recorded on tape.

APPENDIX E

Check list of experiences rated by pupils.

	Didn't Like 0	Liked a Little 1	Fair 2	Liked a Lot 3	Liked Most 4
1. Making things					
2. Making pictures & painting					
3. Playing games					
4. Seeing movies					
5. Having lunch					
6. Having milk breaks					
7. Hearing music					
8. Reading stories					
9. Listening to stories					
10. Trip to:					
_____					
11. Trip to:					
_____					
12. Other (such as Spanish Day)					
_____					
_____					

APPENDIX F

Anecdotal records and diaries of teachers in the children's program

I Please include any descriptive data which may serve to evaluate this program: photographs; off-the-cuff statements by pupils; list of products, i.e., arts and crafts; feed-back from parents, bus drivers.

II Each teacher is requested to write a paragraph, or more, on his evaluation of the summer experience in terms of its value in developing a positive attitude toward school, and particularly regarding curiosity, and interest in reading.

APPENDIX G

Pre-course teacher questionnaires

I Education # 569 - Methods & Materials for Teaching High School Reading

In order that this course might zero in on those areas of most interest to you, would you please score the following topics according to the following scale:

0 = no interest
1 to 5, using 5 to indicate highest interest

___1. Definition of a retarded reader.
___2. Diagnosis of individual reading problems.
___3. Use of psychiatric team in diagnosis of reading problem.
___4. Use of case-conference team in diagnosis of reading problem.
___5. Use of test scores to determine pupil's reading level.
___6. Planning remedial reading program.
___7. Use of "reading diary" as an aid to diagnose reading problem.
___8. Effect of a culturally deprived background on reading ability.
___9. Verbalization: how to help children improve in; also how lack of this ability relates to difficulties in reading.
___10. Basic techniques of teaching reading in the elementary school.
___11. Liaison with the elementary school.
___12. Use of materials available through the Audio-Visual Dept. at Lyons Falls.
___13. Reading as a recreational device.
___14. Development of subject-matter reading skills (each subject-matter teacher a reading teacher.)
___15. How to help students develop mastery of basic skills (vocabulary development, get main idea, how to study.)
___16. Writing of compositions within the context of the developmental reading program.
___17. List here any other topics you wish included: _____

_____

_____

II Education # 574 - Clinical Course in Reading

The Clinical Course in Reading will be concerned with ways in which teachers may aid children who are culturally deprived, the so-called disadvantaged children, to acquire the background needed to prepare them for reading, not only in grade one, but throughout the elementary school. Disadvantaged children often have a limited vocabulary, limited experiences and as a result a limited ability to verbalize.

In order that this course may concentrate on the topics of most interest and help to you, will you please score the following according to this scale:

0 = no interest
1 to 5, using 5 to indicate highest interest

___1. Identification of "disadvantaged child."
___2. Discussion of effect this meager background has on reading readiness and reading ability throughout the first six grades.
___3. Objectives in teaching reading.
___4. Steps in learning to read.
___5. How to help pupils verbalize.
___6. Reading in other subject areas.
___7. Areas of development teacher should consider in deciding when child is ready to read.
___8. How awareness of areas of reading readiness carries through other grades.

Materials and activities classroom teachers can use to help children acquire richer background in:

___9. Literature
___10. Music
___11. Science
___12. Discussion of techniques used to diagnose reading problems.
___13. List here any other topics you wish included: _____

_____

_____

III Education # 553 - Mental Health in the Classroom

In order that this course might zero in on those areas of most interest to you, would you please score the following topics according to the following scale:

0 = no interest
1 to 5, using 5 to indicate highest interest

___1. Mental health theory and principles.
___2. Better understanding of behavior.

___3. Identification of "emotionally disturbed child."
___4. Identification of "mentally retarded child."
___5. Identification of "disadvantaged child."
___6. Better understanding of a pupil's "life space."
___7. The pupil's expectations of a teacher.
___8. The teacher's expectations of a pupil.
___9. Effective observations of a pupil by the teacher.
___10. The teacher's role in promoting mental health in the classroom.
___11. Case-conferences and parent-teacher conferences.
___12. The teacher's use of community resources.
___13. Discipline within the classroom.
___14. Grading: problems for teacher and pupil.
___15. The problems of communication between teacher and pupil, teacher and administrator, etc.
___16. Dangers of labeling pupils, e.g., "I.Q."
___17. Paradoxes in the school system, e.g., new concepts and the institutional requirements.
___18. Please list topics you wish considered, but which are not included in the above:

a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____
etc., etc.

APPENDIX H

Post-course evaluations by teachers

1. What three experiences do you consider most helpful to you?

2. What was the least helpful?

3. What concept or concepts, if any, or what new insights did you get?

4. How was the course inadequate from your particular viewpoint?

5. What do you wish the instructor had done less of?

6. Rate the course as to your general evaluation (Check order).

Poor Fair Average Good Excellent